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Letter dated 21 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the electoral process in Burundi, issued on 19 July 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dirk Jan **van den Berg**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
to the United Nations

04-44409 (E) 300704

Annex to the letter dated 21 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Statement on the electoral process in Burundi issued on 19 July 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union is keeping a close watch on the development of the peace process in Burundi. The establishment of the United Nations peacekeeping operation (ONUB) on 1 June 2004 under the direction of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Carolyn McAskie, constitutes an unprecedented international commitment for Burundi. It is vital that Burundi underpins this international commitment with a political will that is equal to the political, reconstruction and development challenges.

The European Union reiterates its support, in particular its financial support, for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the reform of the defence and security forces. It is the European Union's wish that all the players involved (the Burundian army, the former armed movements, the World Bank via the Multicountry Demobilization and Reintegration Programme, and the other bilateral and international players) maintain close operational coordination under the auspices of ONUB so that the process can be fully implemented.

In order to maintain the momentum of peace and national reconciliation, the European Union's desire is that electoral process provided for in the Arusha Agreement be set in motion in a decisive credible and reassuring way for all sections of Burundian society.

The European Union considers that the urgent setting up of the Independent National Electoral Commission, the adoption of the electoral code and communal law, and the adoption by referendum of the post-transition Constitution would start the process rapidly and definitively. The European Union remains prepared to provide technical and financial assistance, in close collaboration with ONUB, in implementing the electoral commitments laid down in the Arusha Agreement.

The European Union reiterates its firm support for the mediator, the South African Vice-President, Jacob Zuma, and calls on the various political players in Burundi to conclude rapidly, under his aegis, a definitive agreement on the outstanding issues, and, in particular, certain arrangements for political representation following the forthcoming elections.

The European Union reiterates its appeal yet again to Agathon Rwasa's FNL armed movement to cease armed combat and finally opt for negotiations in order to cooperate in the political and socio-economic reconstruction of the country.

The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia,* Romania and Turkey, the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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* Croatia continues to be part of the stabilization and association process.